

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF WORLD VISION INTL PRESIDENT W. STEPHEN
MOONEYHAM AND DIRECTOR HENRY A. BARBER

REF: STATE 091555 (NOTAL) AND PREVIOUS

FOLLOWING REPEAT OF SINGAPORE 01726 DATED 17 APRIL 1978

1. DIRECTOR BARBER OF WORLD VISION INTL. MET WITH EMBOFF
APRIL 11, TO DISCUSS INDOCHINESE REFUGEE MATTERS. HE WAS
GIVEN A GENERAL BRIEFING ON THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SINGA-
PORE AND REFUGEE PROCESSING PROCEDURES. APPOINTMENTS WERE
SCHEDULED FOR BARBER TO MEET WITH SINGAPORE JOINT VOLAG
REP., CYRIL CHEW AND FOR THE PRESIDENT OF WORLD VISION, MR.
MOONEYHAM, ACCOMPANIED BY MR. BARBER TO MEET WITH AMBASSA-
DOR AND DCM THE FOLLOWING DAY.

2. IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR APRIL 12, MOONEYHAM DE-
SCRIBED THE ACTIVITIES OF WORLD VISION IN GLOBAL WELFARE
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AND RELIEF PROGRAMS. HE EXPLAINED THAT WITH WORLD VISION
CAPITAL NOW AT FIFTY-FIVE MILLION DOLLARS, THE ORGANIZA-
TION PLANNED TO EXPAND ITS ACTIVITIES BY ESTABLISHING A
PROJECT TO PURCHASE A VESSEL TO SEARCH FOR AND RESCUE
BOAT CASE REFUGEES FROM THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

3. THE AMBASSADOR, RECALLING THE PROBLEMS CREATED BY AN

UNSUCCESSFUL SIMILAR PROJECT OPERATED BY THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE (WCRP) LAST YEAR, POINTED OUT THE DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE SUCH A PROJECT COULD HAVE ON THE CONTINUING SUPPORT FROM REFUGEE ACCEPTING COUNTRIES WITH ALREADY ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS, THE PROBABLE HARDENING OF ATTITUDES BY COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM AND THE HARDSHIP THE REFUGEES THEMSELVES MIGHT EXPERIENCE IF THE PROJECT WAS NOT PROPERLY MANAGED. THE QUESTION OF WHERE THE REFUGEES COULD BE LANDED WAS A FURTHER PROBLEM. DISCUSSION OF THIS POINT LED TO MENTION OF PRIME MINISTER LEE'S OFFER OF AN ISLAND TRANSIT CAMP FOR BOAT CASE REFUGEES. MR. MOONEYHAM, ALREADY BRIEFED BY THE DEPARTMENT ON THE GOS REQUIREMENT FOR "BANKABLE GUARANTEES," REMARKED THAT HE WOULD EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF WHETHER A WORLD VISION OFFER TO FINANCE AND OPERATE THE CAMP WOULD IN ANY WAY SOFTEN GOS POLICY WHEN HE MET WITH MFA PERMSEC, CHIA CHEONG FOOK, ON APRIL 13.

4. MR. MOONEYHAM LATER INFORMED EMBOFFS THAT HE HAD RAISED SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE WORLD VISION OFFER TO FINANCE AND OPERATE ISLAND TRANSIT CAMP AT HIS MEETING WITH PERMSEC CHIA CHEONG FOOK. LATTER HAD INDICATED THAT QUESTION OF FINANCING WAS NOT MAJOR CONCERN OF GOS, SINCE UNHCR HAD ALREADY OFFERED TO FINANCE AND OPERATE CAMP. MAIN PROBLEM WAS THAT OF "BANKABLE GUARANTEES."

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5. MR. MOONEYHAM PAID A SECOND CALL ON AMBASSADOR APRIL 14. HE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT, IN LIGHT OF HIS DISCUSSION IN SINGAPORE, PLANS FOR OPERATING A SHIP IN SOUTH CHINA SEA HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT MODIFIED. SHIP WOULD NOT HAVE MISSION OF PICKING UP REFUGEES AT SEA AND DELIVERING THEM TO CAMPS. INSTEAD, SHIP WOULD BE STAFFED WITH DOCTORS, NURSES, AND MECHANICS AND STOCKED WITH FOOD, SUPPLIES, ETC. ITS MISSION WOULD BE TO ASSIST REFUGEE BOATS AT SEA, REPAIRING THEM, PROVISIONING THEM, AND PROVIDING SAILING DIRECTORS. SHIP WOULD BE OPERATED OUT OF SINGAPORE. HE HAD DISCUSSED THESE PLANS WITH SINGAPORE OFFICIALS, WHO HAD INDICATED THAT THEY DOUBTED GOS WOULD HAVE ANY OBJECTION. A NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL WOULD BE IN ACTUAL CHARGE OF OPERATING SHIP. MOONEYHAM STATED THAT HE WAS NOT ASKING AMBASSADOR'S ADVICE ON THIS PROJECT, BUT WAS MERELY TELLING HIM ABOUT IT AS ACT OF COURTESY.

6. AMBASSADOR OBSERVED THAT, WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT, OPERATORS OF SHIP WOULD PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO AVOID

PICKING UP SOME REFUGEES, I.E., THOSE FROM SINKING BOATS. MR. MOONEYHAM AGREED THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY INEVITABLE,

AND ASKED WHAT EMBASSY COULD DO TO HELP IN THIS CASE.
AMBASSADOR SAID WE WOULD DO WHAT WE COULD, ARRANGING TO
INTERVIEW THOSE REFUGEES PICKED UP AT SEA TO DETERMINE
WHETHER THEY COULD BE BROUGHT TO U.S.

7. COMMENT: WITHOUT IN ANY WAY QUESTING SINCERITY OR
DEDICATION OF WORLD VISION REPRESENTATIVES, WE HAVE RESER-
VATIONS ABOUT PRACTICALITY OF PROPOSED SHIP PROJECT.
MODIFIED PLAN, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO HAVE LESS POTENTIAL
FOR CREATING INADVERTENT DIFFICULTIES IN HANDLING REFUGEE
FLOW THAN ORIGINAL PROPOSAL. VANCE

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